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'GOING OUT WITH THE TIDE': THREE GENERATIONS OF SCOTSMEN AND THE SEA

VALENTINA BOLD

He's going out with the tide,' said Mr. Peggotty to me, behind his hand.

My eyes were dim, and so were Mr. Peggotty's; but I repeated in a whisper, 'With the tide?'

People can't die, along the coast,' said Mr. Peggotty, 'except when the tide's pretty nigh out. They can't be born, unless it's pretty nigh in – not properly born, till flood. He's a going out 'With the tide?' with the tide'.... And, it being low water, he went out with the tide.

Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (London, 1850), XXX.¹

The identity of the North East of Scotland, surrounded by sea on three sides, has been shaped by its fishing communities. The symbiotic relationship Dickens indicates in *David Copperfield*, between the sea and the fishing communities of South East England, is just as marked in North East Scotland. During the twentieth century, though, people's attitudes towards the sea have undergone subtle alterations. This essay considers the experiences of four North Easters born between 1905 and 1967, who have worked out of five North East ports (Buchanhaven, Peterhead, Gamrie, Aberdeen, and Stonehaven). By discussing extracts from tape-recorded interviews with these men, I hope to identify the precise ways in which 'going out with the tide' has been both an enduring and changing experience for North East Scots.²

Andra, the first seafaring Scot to be considered here, comes from Buchanhaven, a small fishing community just outside Peterhead. He is a ninety two year old retired fisherman. Andra's attitudes typify those of the generation born at the turn of the present century. Andra was born in 1905, and first went out to sea as a small boy, in his father's boat, *The Star Divine*. His first experiences were of the line fishing, working with lines of over five hundred hooks baited for the herring. Andra left school at thirteen to become a full time fisherman and worked at sea until his sixties. He is immensely proud of his fishing days, with a real sense of having been an adventurer. He fished round the coasts of England, Russia and Newfoundland and, as he has told me several times, 'A've been... up among the Eskimoes...up to Greenland...up tae Davis Straits' in the days of the whaling.³

Andra spent most of his working life on a ninety foot motor drifter, the *Star of Bethlehem*. Motor drifters shoot about ninety nets in a strip; these are left drifting and then pulled in. Andra is particularly proud of having achieved an 'extra skipper's ticket' on the *Star o Bethlehem*. The skipper of the *Star* was colour blind and could not navigate. Although not technically the skipper, Andra became 'navigational skipper', with 'nine of a crew...[they're] dead now...and A'm still alive'. Andra's

son, 'young Andra', in his late fifties, still fishes out of Peterhead.⁴

The first extract is edited from a longer discussion at the Retired Fishermen's Group of the Peterhead Deep Sea Fishermen's Mission. This was my first meeting with Andra. The first speaker Curly, is not a fisherman himself, but a painter and decorator (whose work has included painting boats); the second speaker, Willie, is a fisherman in his late 60s, who will be met again below: Val is the interviewer.

Curly: Tell her about the time the boat, when your a, yer *ain* boat went ashore.

Willie: When yir *boat went aground*.

Andra: *The Star, the Star o Bethlehem....*

Val: How did you feel when THAT happened?

Andra: Nae very bright [laughs] No very good....

Willie: Aye, it wis at the Kyles....

Andra: *That's* right.

Curly: Wis she *complete*, wis she a *complete*, wis she a *complete* loss?

Andra: Yes. [pause: 1 second]

Curly: Yes, but yir *life* wis saved. *That's* obvious....

Willie: Well it wis the *Kyles*, the narrows o the *Kyles*.

Andra: Oh yes, *that's* right.. [nodding] [pause: 1 second]

Willie: A don't remember *it*. It wis a *drifter*, ye see. It wis the *Kyles*. You know where Kyles o Lochalsh is?... Well it wis *up through* the *Narrows* on the way to Mallaig.... There's a *very very strong tide* in there.⁵

The understated qualities of Andra's contribution, his 'no very good' response to *The Star* going aground, is typical of fishermen in his generation. To those of Andra's age, the hazards of the sea are viewed almost with acceptance. While I'm not implying that Andra is unemotional in his response – there is no doubt that he was profoundly affected by the loss of his fellow seamen – it seems he views the tragedies he has witnessed with a certain amount of resignation. As one would expect from the context, those who attend the Fishermen's Mission are deeply religious although not overtly so when describing disasters. Andra exhibits a typically Scottish reductive idiom; when talking about his Greenland experiences, for instance, his usual comment is only that it was 'verra cold'.

Stories have often been told to me by the Deep Sea Fishermen as a group. Even when the main participant is present to offer a first hand account, others take up the tale. For instance, Willie, the fisherman who expanded the story, tells it almost as if he was there, offering: 'Aye, it wis at the Kyle's'. Even though Willie was not present at the time of *The Star* going aground (and emphasises this), he feels confident enough to offer an imagined reconstruction of the event, in sketchy detail, and to add a detail from his own experience: the strength of the tide in the Kyles. Andra, incidentally, often prefers to let other men take up his life story (perhaps because he has told the tales many times). His friends always respond courteously and with deference, extending the idea which is recurrent among fishermen – of the necessity of a 'good

crew' on a boat – into a mutual supportiveness over time. Willie, incidentally, has also been involved in a shipwreck, although he did not volunteer this information at the time. Having shared a similar experience, perhaps, he felt qualified to talk about Andra's.

The passage illustrates a tendency, among North East fishermen, to share accounts of their experiences at sea. This could be described as a manifestation of a 'collective consciousness' within fishing communities. Outstanding events become 'show pieces' in the community repertoire, part of a collective tradition rather than individual experiences, part of a continuous and accruing local history. They become directly inherited, community episodes, to develop Endel Tulvig's idea of 'episodic memory'.⁶ The experiences of fishermen from different generations seem often to be viewed as part of a continuum.

In the generation younger than Andra, more openly expressed emotion is evident. This can be seen by comparing Andra's experiences with those of Willie from Gamrie (Gardenstown) on the Moray Firth. Willie, as he says, was 'born and bred to the sea'. He first went to sea on his father's boat, *The Ruby*, at the age of four and, like Andra, Willie was a full time fisherman at the age of thirteen. He started off as cook (as was typical for his generation) and worked up to taking a skipper's ticket and owning his own boat. He says that, 'When A *startit* A wis *sick* every day. The *thing fur sickness* is responsibility. Well, if ye're the *skipper* and you're *sick*, the *day* you put down your *head*, that's it *finished!*' Willie fished out of the North East until recently, and still goes out to sea about once a month. He has two sons who were both fishermen, one now works in the oil industry. In the extract, Jackie and Curly are both retired fishermen and Bob is the Superintendent of the Deep Sea Fishermen's Mission:

Val: What was the name of your *own* boat?

Willie: *Prevail*.

Val: Right.

[pause: 1 second]

Willie: So, A *had* it fur a wee while.

Andro: Ah.

Willie: It wis *scrapped* last year A think. ...*Aaaah*, and it wis *sold*, tae *Ireland*.

Andro: *Aye*, aye.

George: That's right enough.

Willie: *Aye* cause *Ireland* is.

Bob: Yeh.

Willie: She wis *built* in nineteen fifty *three*. An A had her thirty seven years.

[sighs; pause: 1 second]

George: That's a long *time*.

Willie: Of course A *wasnae* skipper o her frae the *start*, a wis *only* the skipper for ten years.... [five] and she was *sold* and she was worth more when she was *sold*, [pause: half a second] when she was *scrapped*.

Curly: What did you *get* for the boat?

- Willie: A got hundred and *thirty thousand* for it, and it *only* cost £12, 868 to *buy*, *new*.
- Bob: So that's compared to [what they are now?].
- Willie: See they, *they* bought it without a *licence*.
- Bob: Aw right.
- Willie: The *decommissioners*. They do now.
- Bob: It's a lot of money.
- Willie: Ah, A know.
- Val: Was it *built* up in Gamrie or...
- Willie: Macduff, Macduff.
- [pause: half a second]
- Willie: She was a *good* one.....*Good*.

The main aspect which struck me when I was listening to this, was the way the men describe, and respond to, the loss of a boat. It is as if the boat were Willie's wife, and he was the widower. Losing a boat, in this context, extending Andra's experience, becomes like a personal bereavement, to be treated with respect and sympathy. Intriguingly, North East fishermen invariably have paintings, photographs or models of their boats on display in their homes but not always pictures of their wives. The image of being 'married to the sea' comes to mind, and I don't think it trivialises a way of life where men often spent weeks away from home on their boats. Coming home, instructively, is often described as a 'honeymoon': as if a new bride has temporarily been taken. Willie takes, overall, a much more pragmatic attitude towards his life and its hazards than Andra; he accepts the harshness of seafaring life but is more overtly emotional. This is typical of the North East fishermen of this generation.

Younger fishermen are, on the whole, less pragmatic about their experiences, and more aware of the disadvantages of seafaring life. Walter, for instance, is a thirty year old from Aberdeen, who fished out of Stonehaven for two years. Although he comes from a fishing family, like the older fishermen, he did not immediately go to sea after leaving school, but worked in various jobs before being offered work on a small boat in Stonehaven. Walter started his seafaring life trawling for cod, at sea from midnight on Sunday to Tuesday at eight, and midnight on Tuesday till Thursday at eight – 'Two days [at sea] wis lang enough like'. The boat was cleaned out on a Friday. Walter, unlike the older fishermen going out with the tide on family boats, was consciously engaged in an economic enterprise:

Fan I first startit, it wis a side netter, the net came off the side o the boat, an we wis actually trawlin for cod, but there wisna a lot o fish. We niver made any money, so we decided tae try drift nettin. The net sits on the surface, an that wis really inshore, like, aboot a quarter o a mile actually off the land. We tried that for a couple o days, bit at wis jist a waste o time as well. So the skipper decided, jist aboot Christmas – cause I startit in December '94. – [to get the boat] changed for scallopin. Aberdeen hid a lot o scallop grounds aff it an nobody realized.... It wis OK in calm weather,

bit in rough weather it wis a bit dangerous. Out on sea it was pretty rough an it wis only a forty foot boat, so it used tae bob about all the time....

I wis seasick, the first trip, that's common. Mind you, sayin that, there's a guy down Stonehaven at's been at sea thirty-five years, he still gets seasick [laughs]. It is a hard life, you're never at home. I know a guy in Fraserburgh, an I wis speakin tae his wife, he wis actually at home twenty-eight days out of a whole year! All the rest o the time he wis fishin. It's not much o a life, you know. If the catch wis good, you wis workin aa the time. If not, you maybe got an hour's sleep here an there. Bit then again, you hid tae do the cookin an ye need tae take watches. Everybody took their turn on watches.

....The worst thing about fishin, I would say, is (an a few people have actually said this) is actually goin away, is actually gettin from your house tae the boat. It's OK once you're on the boat. Bit it's actually gettin doon [from] the house to the harbour. It's the worst feelin ever: 'Oh God, I'm goin away again'. The minute you're on the boat an oot o the harbour, you're fine, you know?... [Bit] Many a time I wis on e bus goin from Aberdeen tae Stonehaven, thinkin, Will I get aff an phone im up an say "A'm not [goin]"?

Walter, unlike the older fishermen, has a keen awareness of the limitations of a life at the fishing, 'It's not much o a life'. In this, he is fairly typical of the younger fishermen working in the North East. However, the humour he shows in talking about his experiences reflects a sense of enjoyment, and pride, which younger fishermen retain in their work. This, as a rule, outweighs the arduousness of the work and its recognised hazards, as Walter observes:

I enjoyed goin away. We niver used tae go that far off. We used tae go, what, maybe forty, fifty miles at most. It's good, you know, ye'd see the dawns, specially in simmer, sunsets. Jist actually bein miles away from anywhere, like no land in about ye at all. Ye can see the odd boat now an again. It wis pretty go it all. An then actually comin home again is pretty good as well, when ye seen Stonehaven, you thought, ah that's great, home at last [laughs]. Not long tae go now.

I enjoyed it, like. I would go back to it if, as I say, the right job came along. I've also got home life tae think about, as well. I would rather go fishin than go offshore, definitely.

Walter gave up fishing after two years, moving on to other areas of work. However, his awareness of the aesthetic appeal of fishing, and the pleasing aspects of coming home from the fishing, suggest a continuity of experience with the older fishermen, with their pragmatic awareness of the dangers, and advantages, in seafaring life. In comparison with working at sea in oil-related jobs, 'going out with the tide' to fish is seen as wholly preferable.

The experience of Scotsmen working in the modern oil industry is quite different from that of the fishermen. The fourth person I'll introduce is Bob, a man in his

forties who was born in Glasgow, where his family worked in the Clydeside shipyards. Before he came to the North East, Bob had worked at petrochemical sites onshore, at Grangemouth, Swansea, Libya and Algiers. He saw coming to the North East in 1977, to work offshore, as 'a natural progression'. However, the North Sea was different to any working environment he had experienced before. Bob left the oil industry after being involved in the Piper Alpha disaster in July 1988 – an experience which obviously colours his memories of life at sea – but still has many friends who work in oil. Bob now lives in Aberdeen with his wife, Pat, and two children:

Bob: *A* think it's, it's a *dehumanising* effect ye hiv in the North Sea, for, fur an an awfu lot of people who're takin it as normal *circumstances*, ye know their *environment*, and the stuff in *here* [taps head] in their *isolation*. And they *hiv* a sense o *isolation*. *A* aways sed tae see *A'd* love tae get a *brain* that *liked* the North Sea and *pickle* it and take it *roond* as an *exhibit*.

[both laugh]

Bob: Cause *A* think it's like a *Frankenstein!* [laughs] creation. But there's people *like* it, a *know* there's people like the North sea, they jist don't like it fur the two weeks *off*. Cause it *gives* them aw this power, there's a *tremendous* amount o *power* out there for a *lot* o people, *especially* as 80% of people is made up of *contractors*, and *you* as the, eh, core *operator* hiv *jurisdiction* over them. You know.

Val: Mmm.

Bob: When *A* say "Jump", you *jump*, you *know*? *A* mean *A* used tae be tolt things like, "There the *boss* comin" and a'd say, "*A* didnae know Pat wis *here!*"

[both laugh]

Bob: Where *is* she! And they *didnae* like that sense o *humour*.

Val: Aye.

Bob: But *A'd* say, "*A've* only got *one* boss and she's no *here!*"

Val: Aye.

Bob: Things like *that!*⁹

This extract indicates the completely different mindset of those who work in the oil industry, from those who work in the fishing, particularly when compared to the most senior seafarers. Bob, in some senses, is an atypical oil worker: he is politically active and highly analytical. However, his criticism of the oil environment, and identification of 'isolation' and 'dehumanising' aspects expresses a deep-seated dissatisfaction among Scotsmen at sea in the oil industry. This is true, at least, of the contractors who make up the majority of the labour force: on short term, trip to trip contracts, despite their notoriously high salaries. Although the term 'offshore community' is often used in the industry, Bob denies the existence of this vehemently: 'What ye hid wis a whole group of people from different *industries*, from different parts of the

country, and after that two weeks wis off they went *back*..... There was no such *thing* as 'the offshore community'. Moreover, existing communities are affected because of the industry, which creates 'offshore widows' as well as what Bob terms, 'two week alcoholics', unable to drink at work and making up for the loss at home (in much the same way, of course, as some fishermen on their day off in port over indulge themselves).

The oil industry's economic migration, as Bob is aware, has had profound and lasting effects on family life. Bob found the stream of pornography on the oil rigs equally 'dehumanising' and disturbing:

You'd hiv the television goin in the cabin, and it'd be *pornography*, so, you've got te, *you're* a woman and you're comin *intae* it, and the guy's got a towel wrapped roond himself, and that, he's jist come out the shower and he's got a towel round o that, "How're *you*, Maggie" "Terrific", "*Whit*'d ye think o *that*, Maggie, OK?" You *know*?... And you say te yersel, "Why are they *doin* this? Who are they tryin to *frighten*, or *who* are they tryin tae *impress*?" Cause *that* lassie's in there fur tae make your *bunk*, you *know*? And yet ye're carryin on, do ye do that in the *hoose*?... It was, ye know, really, really *really* strange.¹⁰

This artificial relationship between oil men and their environment can be extended by observing that the oil men have little contact with the host culture in the North East. They maintain, largely, their own local identities, not wholly integrating with the indigenous North East communities. Bob has thought about this a great deal:

It's *again*, comin fae two different *cultures*..... comin from an industrial culture and them comin from a *fishin* culture...there wis a *separation* from people comin from the *city* and comin from an *industrial* background and movin intae the, the *rural* background, or where there's a *platform* there getting *refurbished*, eh, and we hid a *local* and an *incomer* culture.

The workers, moreover, are cut off from their own cultural traditions. As Bob says, 'I was quite surprised at...the lack of...trade union involvement, as people came from the shipyards, came from the steel works came from the mining'. The oil companies exert a paternalistic control over every aspects of the oilmen's life; insidiously, there is even a shift away from shared lounges to providing satellite televisions within cabins; Bob believes this is, 'to break up people meeting'.

Bob's sense of exclusion, and being distanced, as has been seen above, can be seen too among the youngest fishermen, many of whom have moved out of the fishing industry recently, faced with a stark choice of observing the quota and failing financially, subverting the quota (which some do) or joining one of the new, big factory ships, like the King's Cross which fishes out of Peterhead. Current experiences, in this context, shape recollections of the past, and attitudes to the present and future. Older fishermen's attitudes are shaped by their son's experiences in a

creative process, involving the interviewer in a collaborative process which Mark Freeman has termed, 'rewriting the self'.¹¹ The retired fishermen, especially in the interview context, constantly to compare past and present. Willie, for instance, commented on the modern fishing vessel the *King's Cross*:

Willie: That *King's Cross*, That *big yin*, the *new*?.... That could take as much in *one week* as what the whole *fleet* would've done....in a *fishin season*.... they've *aw* the boats hiv the, *gear*, the, and the *sonars*....., they've got *aw* the navigation, and it's *all* done by satellite and [pause: one second] they're a *loat* cleverer now than what *we* were..... O the *fishin's* jist up side *down* now from how it used to be.... *We* wouldn't know what to *do* at that *kind* o fishin and *half* o *thaim* wouldn't know what to do with *ours*.... goin tae the *prawns* this season, it's *changed* now, where *we* used tae tow *one* net, they're towing *two* nets now. *bigger* boats, *more* horsepower.... And *instead* o haing a *two* barrelled winch, they hiv a *three* barrelled winch so they can huv *middle* wire and tow the *nets*.... You're *nothin* like the *old* boats, ye see, they're *all* covered in now, it's like *workin* inside a *factory*.... At *that* time, ye see, *workin* drift nets, ye wis *open*.... An ye got *aw* the *spray* and the *scalders*, that's the *jellyfish*, *ohh!*

Modern disillusionment is linked to a break in continuity on behalf of the families. Again, as Willie points out, 'There used tae be a whole *fleet* of drift net boats but *now* they fall into two or three families' *hands*'. Fishermen, too, often work on the modern oil standby boats.

I can perhaps offer some general suggestions about the different relationships between the sea of the older generations and the younger. The main differences between the fishing and oil industries are linked to four areas: location, personnel, expectations and values. The fishing industry is both international and local in focus, leading to a strong sense of regional identity. Travelling to Dickens' East Anglia to follow the herring every autumn, for instance, as part of an annual fishing cycle, Peterhead boats stayed together at Yarmouth, Gamrie boats at Lowestoft. The oil industry, of course, is multinational, but most of the personnel on the nominally British rigs come from the industrial areas of Scotland and England. Those involved in the fishing industry have allegiances to their point of origin, moving down the Eastern seaboard; the oil men are on unfamiliar ground, moving through the 'transit town' of Aberdeen to their own homes. The older fishermen, significantly, inhabited a familiar landscape; they could identify a boat by its shape alone and so the sea became an extension of their home communities. They shared a language – 'shootin the lines, reddin the nets'. The oil men, in contrast, are alone at sea; they are not beholden to the tide; they live in an artificial environment lit up, as I've been told, 'like a Christmas tree' at night. The work of the fishermen was regular, as Willie describes:

When *we* went out at the *fishin* at that time, the fishing was *seasonal*.... *First* of all you would've been at *Stornoway* in the *wintertime*, *Fraserburgh* in the

summertime, or *Shetland*..... *Scarborough* in *September*. *Lowestoft* in *October* or *November*..... A trip tae Cape *Grenaise* afore ye came *home*. That's what we used to do, an then back to the West Coast again..... Round about Mallaig.¹²

The oil men work two weeks on, two weeks off, despite the time of year.

The second major difference is in terms of the crew and fishing fleet. The notion of the 'good crew' is enduring for fishermen. With the line fishing, for instance, it could take it a day to pull in the nets (as opposed to four or five hours with drift nets). Without modern power blocks, the labour was gruelling and a good crew, who had worked together for ten years or more, could considerably lighten the work load. The Peterhead fishermen are typical of the North East communities: they fished together, at the same local ports, on a regular export cycle. Boats in the North East, as elsewhere, have names that stick with families; a common phrase is that fishing is 'in the blood'; skippers and crews alike mix together. Oilmen, however, are not all from the same location; they are imported to one central point of work, whether a semi-submersible or a platform. The artificial oil grouping, rather than forming a 'crew', is composed of a set of itinerant labourers and specialised tradesmen: scaffolders, or welders. The fishermen are seasonal workers, the oil men more regular, nowadays with two weeks on and two weeks off. The fleet go out with the tide to various locations, the oilmen come in with the tide from various locations. Where all ages work together in fishing, oilmen are mainly in their 20s-40s, creating an artificial environment of age, even if, in terms of gender balance, they are similar to the fishermen. While a 'crew' have a vested interest and, at least in the early period, often shares in the ship, most oilmen are contractors, on short term contracts, or specialists with status in the small, core crew, separated rigidly by status. Those going into the oil industry in the 1970s were told it would last for twenty five years at most; working to build one platform would not guarantee working on it when built. Shifts are long, twelve hours or upwards, and as Bob says, 'this is where the *isolation* [comes in] ye *canna* get away fur it'.

The area of expectations is a key one: the retired fishermen, certainly those from in their 60s and older, expected to go to sea and did so; their wives expected to work in fishing-related industries, such as gutting, before marriage. Women, of course, accompanied the Scottish menfolk on their trips to East Anglia, to provide fish processing services. The older fishermen's sons spent their lives at sea, but their grandsons, more and more, turn to alternative forms of labour. The younger fishermen are moving more towards the oil industry model of short term labour; there is a shift from sea life to quota life (much more transient and temporary); there is less of a sense of passing on traditions to sons. Paradoxically, in the oil industry most recently there has been a shift to longer term expectations.

There is a stark contrast between 'coastal' values, exemplified by the fishing communities and the values of 'industrial' oil and fishing; the seas have, to some extent become urbanised. The extracts seem to indicate a feeling of a shift analagous to that from pastoral and urban societies, with the related problems of 'anomie' and what Durkheim discerned as a 'structural defect' associated with urban society: 'too

much wealth so easily becomes a source of immorality.... moral equilibrium is unstable'.¹³ As Edward Spicer has observed, 'customs and beliefs are linked into a whole...changes in one aspect of life will have repercussions on other aspects'.¹⁴ The accounts of the modern oil industry, and modern fishing, are close to what Raymond Williams 'the literature of rural loss and memory'.¹⁵ Whereas in 1983 Paul Thompson could observe that the fishing industry had been resistant, despite 'tendencies' to the contrary, to the drive towards 'shore capitalists',¹⁶ Scotsmen in the 1990s are aware of a profound shift in the industry and values of life at sea.

There has been, then, a dramatic shift in value systems; from acceptance, to pragmatism, to (in many cases) disillusionment or even abandoning the fishing as a way of life, with differences between old style fishing and new style oil which have implications, too, for the fishing industry. Where the older fishermen may be seen as married to the sea (albeit a marriage of convenience) the younger fishermen, and oilmen, are engaged in economic marriage. The feminised boat should be compared to the genderless oil rig, antithetical to family life, in terms of allegiances. The old fishermen, as has been seen, are very conscious of changes, believing the younger fishermen get a very poor deal. The tight quota system in the fishing has, in Scotland as elsewhere, led directly to a huge amount of disillusionment with the last government's policies. However, this disillusionment is part of a gradual process which can be observed by comparing fishermen's experiences with that of oil workers (where the effects are even more pronounced than among the younger fishermen). Intriguingly, there may be a new development; given the recent changes in government Scotland has experienced, there is a new feeling of what Bob describes as 'euphoria' among oil workers. 'Going out with the tide' is still, in effect, an enduring option of lifestyle for North East Scots, both those with long roots in the area, and incomers.

NOTES

- ¹ This paper was delivered at the 1997 Conference of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada in St John's, Newfoundland. The people quoted here are referred to by their first names only, at their own request. I am grateful to the Retired Fishermen at the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, Peterhead, for all their help, and particularly to the Superintendent, Bill Simmonds.
- ² See Malcolm Gray, *The Fishing Industries of Scotland, 1790-1914. A Study in Regional Adaptation* (Oxford, 1978). Peterhead was the centre of the Scottish whaling industry, and a major port for the herring fishing, in the nineteenth century. It is still the main North East port for modern beam trawling, with Fraserburgh and Aberdeen as rivals (the last, in particular, for oil related vessels). Stonehaven is a smaller but significant port, south of Aberdeen. Gardenstown, on the Northernmost North East shore, was founded in 1720 by the landowner Alexander Garden of Troup; it grew into a major herring fishing area by the early twentieth century; see A. Correspondent, 'The Fishermen of the Moray Firth', *The Scots Magazine* (May 1972), 157-64.
- ³ The line fishing involved several stages, 'reddin the lines' with two or three people putting the

lines into baskets and sticking the hooks into corks, then 'shooting the lines', then grabbing the hooks, with two or three round a basket, to pull in the lines, with a knife ready to cut off the fish. William Whyte, from Fraserburgh, born in 1912, describes the experience:

We shot fifty-six baskets...o three hundred fathoms, a fathom's two yards. Ye bait them the time o shootin. The boat wis goin *ahead, steamin* ahead, ye'd the *basket* against the gunwhale, an a man at one side and one at the ither, an hooks wis all on top o the basket in a *cork*, in *rotation*. So you'd the bait, all cut, in a box, so you picked up your herrin wi this, an took a hook oot an put it through the [fish], round the bone, an threw't over the side..... FR [Fraserburgh] boats all worked *three* [men per line], an they could *actually bait* that lines steamin full speed, goin aboot nine tae ten knots.... iverything wis piled in the baskets, no messin aboot, an ye jist picked up yer hook in rotation. An by the time that ye got this [een], the ither fellow hid his, so it wis nae bad. Ye wis goin't a fair speed. EI BV1997.2.

All references to recordings are to items in the Elphinstone Institute's archive. AD represents a Date, MD a minidisc and BV a betacam recording. The transcription style is meant to suggest the way the men speak, without compromising their meaning. Italics are used to show emphasis and ellipses to indicate that text has been omitted. On whaling in the North East see Robert Smith, *The Whale Hunters* (Edinburgh, 1993) and Gavin Sutherland, *The Whaling Years* (Aberdeen, 1993).

- 4 See Richard Hallelwell, *Scotland's Sailing Fishermen* (Perth, 1991). Boat names with Christian connotations, like the *Star Divine* and the *Star o Bethlehem* are particularly common in the North East; see James Slater, *Business in Great Waters. Fishing boat names, Bible-wise and other wise; with a selection of poems* (Aberdeen, 1990). Andra is quoted from the Elphinstone Institute recording, EI AD 1997.2, made at the Peterhead Deep Sea Fishermen's Mission.

5 EI AD 1997.1.

6 See Endel Tulvig, *Elements of Episodic Memory* (Oxford, 1983).

7 Walter went on to explain the processes involved in scalloping:

You've got a big chain bag.... about two metres lang and aboot a metre wide...an it's got teeth at the front o it, about six inches lang, an they're on springs. They scrape along the bottom o the seabed an they flick up all the scallops an the stones intae the bags. We hid four [on] a big, lang pole wi wheels at the end o it. We'd four attached tae each side o the boat, an we jist threw them ower e side an then pull it behind ye, ken, along the bottom o the seabed for about two-three hours. Then you haul it up an empty all the stones, an hopefully lots o scallops, ontae the boat. That's the way it works. EI MD 1998.4.

8 EI MD 1998.4.

9 EI AD.1997.8.

10 On women working in the oil industry, see Robert Moore and Peter Wybrow, *Women in the North Sea Oil Industry, A Report for the Equal Opportunities Commission* (Aberdeen, nd).

11 See Mark Freeman, *Rewriting the self. History, memory, narrative* (London and New York, 1993).

12 EI AD 1997.2.

13 Emile Durkheim, *L'education moral* (1925), quoted Anthony Giddens (ed.), *Emile Durkheim, Selected Writings* (Cambridge, 1972), 173.

14 Edward H. Spicer (ed.), *Human Problems in Technological Change. A Casebook* (New York, 1952), 17.

15 See Leslie Skair, *The Sociology of Progress* (London, 1970); Raymond Williams, *The Country*

and the City (London, 1973), 324.

- ¹⁶ Paul Thompson, *Living the Fishing* (London, 1983). For reasons of space, the experiences of women working in fishing-related tasks has not been considered here. However, similar trends could be traced among women working in the fish processing industry, an area which deserves fuller investigation. See D. Butcher, *Following the Fishing* (Newton Abbott, 1987).